

THE hoodoo which appears to have accompanied the Isle of Man race since it was first held two years ago is, it seems, still following the organisers. This year its effects on the long-distance race was not so pronounced, and, despite very heavy rain and a good deal of low cloud over the Isle of Man during the period in which the competitors arrived at Ronaldsway, every starter managed to get through. On Monday, however, when the two circuit races were to be held, there was low cloud, visibility of the mile-two-miles order and a gale which increased in force to something like 55 m.p.h.

Nowadays, Ronaldsway is an extremely important transport centre—the busiest in this country apart from Croydon—and, ignoring the opinions of the organisers and of racing pilots themselves, it was essential that the local controlled zone should be in force during the entire day. Even if the conditions had been possible it was unlikely that the Ronaldsway control would have been able to fit the event in between the regular arrivals of Rapides and 86s.

The competitors for the main race left Hatfield in almost perfect weather with the promise of a more or less consistent following wind all the way to the Island. But at 10 o'clock, in this bright sunshine, the word surprisingly went round that the conditions over the Irish Sea

THE ISLAND

S. T. Lowe Wins Isle of Man Race at 159.5 m.p.h. m.p.h. : Manx Air Derby Won by J. Rush (Tomtit) at 117 m.p.h.

were far from good, and the first man did not actually leave until 11.25 a.m.

On the run to Liverpool, and indeed as far as St. Bee's Head, the conditions could not have been better. Visibility was ten to twenty miles and there was an effective following wind of about 15 m.p.h. Nevertheless, the majority of the competitors flew at heights below 1,000ft. because of the possibility that higher up the wind, though stronger, might veer and, consequently, not be quite so helpful when the loss of time in climbing was taken into consideration. Our own experience (with Mr. Maclaren and the Stanavo Vega) in covering the course at the time was that the assistance even at 7,000ft. was very little greater than that at 1,000ft., and the quite considerable bumps remained until the machine had been climbed above the cloud layer at 6,000ft. or so. Anyway, that expert in the work of making the best possible use of wind and weather when flying a comparatively slow machine, Flt. Lt. H. R. A. Edwards, chose to fly his sports Avian at about 700ft. and his final position in

the race, third, showed that his judgment was not at fault.

At Liverpool the leaders were Flt. Lt. Edwards, Mr. R. L. Porteous (Chilton) and Mr. C. G. M. Alington (Desoutter), in that order, with speeds of 122.25, 118.62 and 119.85 m.p.h. respectively. The decimal places are official, and it can only be imagined that the timekeeper at Liverpool had measured the course in fractions of yards and the times in twenty-fifths of seconds. Messrs. Dancy and Rowarth (the latter just back from his part in the Air Ministry's American tour) who were, of course, the official handicappers, were satisfied in the final times to deal in half and quarter miles. They came over with Mr. Buckingham in the Dragonfly entered for the Manx Air Derby.

The first pilot of a fast machine to arrive was Mr. G. R. de Havilland, flying the reconstructed and very much prettier and (more important) faster T.K.2. He had picked up one place from Mr. W. Humble's Sparrow Hawk, which was suffering from a persistently inadequate oil pressure, and had averaged about 200 m.p.h. Mr. S. T. Lowe, the eventual winner and winner of last year's Manx Air Derby, flying his recently acquired but so far unvetted Gipsy Comper, was already showing his disregard for the handicapping and had picked up four places, flying the course to Liverpool at an average speed of 167.5 m.p.h. Although his nearest competitor, Mr. P. Avery, who was handling a modified and very fast single-seater Latvian V.E.F. (the one which, in two-seat form, has been about in England quite a lot), had himself overtaken two other machines, he had lost more than two and a half minutes to Lowe and crossed the line ten seconds behind. Among the slower machines Flt. Lt. Edwards had also gained two and a half minutes on Mr. Porteous, the limit man. The Chilton was going very well, but it



Black Monday: Some of the racing machines (and three non-competitors) picketed out in the gale on Whit-Monday, when the Island races had to be cancelled.

Personalities at the finish: From left to right they are Capt. R. H. Stocken (the organising manager), Maj. Gen. Wenninger (the German Air Attaché), Vice-Admiral the Hon. W. S. Leveson-Gower, C.B., D.S.O. (the Lieutenant-Governor), Councillor W. C. Craine (the Mayor of Douglas), and the Misses Sheila and Mabel Glass.

"Flight" photographs.

